Suicides *vis-a-vis* pluse Production

1183. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for this paradox situation of farmers committing suicides because of unremunerative crops and large scale imports and increasing prices of pulses during the last five years; and

(b) if so, the reasons for which pulses can't be grown on a large scale in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) On the basis of various studies conducted to assess the reasons for farmers committing suicide, the causes can broadly be classified as Crop failure; Indebtedness due to loan with high rate of interest; Drought; and Social and Economic Insecurity. The Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) announced in recent years indicate that between 2002-03 and 2006-07 the increase in the MSPs of Pulses has ranged between 6.82 percent in case of Arhar (Tur) to 18.44 percent in case of Gram. The increase in prices of Pulses as reflected by the Whole Prices Index (WPI) is indicative of the gap between domestic supply and demand, while the imports of pulses are undertaken to bridge this gap.

(b) The area under pulses has fluctuated between 20 million hectareas to 23 million hectares per annum during 1995-96 to 2005-06. The increase in the area of a crop is dependent not merely on the MSP of that crop but also on the fulfillment of agro-climatic requirements of that crop. The pulses are genetically low yielding and less input responsive as compared to other crops like cereals, millets and oilseeds. However, the Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilplam and Maize" (ISOPOM) in 14 major pulses growing states with a view to increase the production and productivity of Pulses. Under the scheme assistance is provided to farmers for purchase of breeder seed, production of foundation seed, production and distribution of certified seed, distribution of seed minikrts, plant protection chemicals and equipments, weedicides, supply of rhizobium culture/phosphate solubilising bacteria, distribution of gypsum/pyrite/liming/dolomite, sprinkler sets and water carrying pipes to encourage farmers to grow pulses on a large scale.